

II. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all previous listings of the claims.

1. (Currently amended) A method of communicating over a network, the method comprising:

obtaining a set of rules for classifying messages on a client;

~~generating providing~~ a message on the client to be sent to a server;

classifying the message at the client based on the set of rules, wherein the classifying is based on at least one of:

at least one attribute of a program sending the message, content of the message,

an identity of the client from which the message is being sent, a message type, and an

identity of a processing system processing the message; and

after classifying the message at the client, sending the message to the server based on the message classification, wherein the message classification determines how the message is routed for processing at the server.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising periodically requesting an updated set of rules from the server.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the classifying step includes matching an attribute of the message with at least one of the set of rules.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising adjusting a communications protocol port for the message based on the classification prior to the sending step.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising opening a connection with the server for the message.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving a response message from the server.
8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the classified message and the response message are communicated over a first communications protocol port, and wherein the first communications protocol port is not a default communications protocol port.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising separately monitoring a plurality of ports on the server for messages.
10. (Currently amended) A method of communicating over a network, the method comprising:
- creating a set of rules for classifying messages;
 - providing the set of rules to a client;
 - generating a message at the client;

classifying ~~the~~ [[a]] message at the client based on the set of rules,

wherein the classifying is based on at least one of: at least one attribute of a program sending the message, content of the message, an identity of the client from which the message is being sent, a message type, and an identity of a processing system processing the message, and

wherein the classification of the message determines how the message is routed for processing at a server; and

after the message is classified at the client, separately monitoring on the server for classified messages having one of a plurality of message classifications based on the set of rules.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising receiving a classified message from the client through a unique communications protocol port.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

processing the classified message; and

sending a response message to the client.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising opening a connection with the client.

14. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

receiving a request from the client for an updated set of rules; and

sending the updated set of rules to the client.

15. (Currently amended) A system for communicating over a network, the system comprising:

a rules system for managing a set of rules for classifying messages;

a program for generating messages at a client;

a classification system for classifying messages at [[a]] the client,

wherein the classifying is based on at least one of: at least one attribute of a program sending the message, content of the message, an identity of the client from which the message is being sent, a message type, and an identity of a processing system processing the message, and

wherein a classification of a message determines how the message is routed for processing at a server;

an update system for providing the set of rules to a client; and

a plurality of monitoring systems, wherein each monitoring system monitors for messages having a unique message classification.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, further comprising a plurality of processing systems, wherein each processing system processes messages having a unique message classification.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Original) The system of claim 15, further comprising a maintenance system for periodically requesting the set of rules from the server.

19. (Previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein each monitoring system monitors a unique communications protocol port of the server.

20. (Currently amended) A computer-readable storage unit storing a program product comprising instructions which, when executed, cause a computer system to ~~stored on a recordable medium for communicating~~ communicate over a network, the instructions comprising ~~which when executed comprises:~~

~~program code for managing a set of rules for classifying messages; wherein a classification of a message determines how the message is routed for processing at a server;~~

~~program code for providing the set of rules to a client;~~

~~generating a message at the client;~~

~~program code for classifying the message[[s]] at [[a]] the client,~~

~~wherein the classifying is based on at least one of: at least one attribute of a program sending the message, content of the message, an identity of the client from which the message is being sent, a message type, and an identity of a processing system processing the message, and~~

~~wherein a classification of [[a]] the message determines how the message is routed for processing at a server; and~~

~~program code for separately monitoring a plurality of ports on a server for classified messages.~~

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently amended) The computer-readable storage unit storing a program product of claim 20, wherein the instructions further comprise ~~comprising program code~~ for periodically requesting the set of rules from the server.

23. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising periodically broadcasting an updated set of rules from the server to the client.

24. (New) The system of claim 15, wherein the set of rules further comprises a date and time after which an updated set of rules should be obtained, and wherein the classification system can access the date and time to determine whether the set of rules can continue to be used for classifying messages.

25. (New) The system of claim 18, wherein the classification system is prevented from accessing the set of rules while the set of rules is being updated by the maintenance system.